

MIC MISSION NEWS

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ZAMBIA

THE MSOLO TREE

MADAGASCAR

AN OPTION FOR THE FUTURE

YOUTH

"ECOLOGISTS" IN THE MAKING



PUBLICATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MISSIONARY PRAYER INTENTIONS

July 2008

For World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia

May the experience of World Youth Day kindle the fire of divine love in youth and empower them to be a source of hope for humanity.

August 2008

For the People of God

May careful discernment of charisma and constant commitment to spiritual and cultural formation lead them to holiness and mission.

September 2008

For Christian Families

Through love and communion may they respond to the material and spiritual needs of others.

MASSES FOR READERS' INTENTIONS OFFERED IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

January: *Canada*

February: *Cuba*

March: *Philippines*

April: *Haiti*

May: *Canada*

June: *Bolivia and Chile*

July: *Malawi and Zambia*

August: *Hong Kong and Taiwan*

September: *Madagascar*

October: *Peru*

November: *Japan*

December: *Canada*



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Offices

Missionary Press MIC
120 Place Juge-Desnoyers
Laval, QC Canada H7G 1A4

Phone: (450) 663-6460

Fax: (450) 972-1512

Email: micmissionnews@pressemic.org

Web site: www.soeurs-mic.qc.ca

Directress of Publication

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Administrative Assistant

Carole Guévin

Editors

Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.
Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
André Gadbois

Translation

Claudette Bouchard, M.I.C.
Robin Dick

In Collaboration

Linda Anderson, PhD
Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.

Promotion

Antoinette Castonguay, M.I.C.

Circulation

Monique Lagarde

Accounting

Thérèse Déziel, M.I.C.

Layout & Design

CoopDesign

Printing

Solisco

Cover

Photo: Riho Nakamura

Editorial Board

Monique Bigras, M.I.C.
Pauline Williams, M.I.C.
Geneviève Dick
André Gadbois

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EDITORIAL

AWAY FROM THE HUMDRUM

Scrutinizing the unknown and discovering something new can be quite fascinating. While safeguarding nature, summertime offers us a variety of means to divert our attention away from the humdrum. Exploring the outdoors inquisitively, discovering hidden realities which seem so simple at first sight... how delightful this can be!

A slogan of Radio Canada tells us: HEAR TO SEE—as for myself, I invite you to: ADMIRE TO THANK. Every day we are blessed with a rich, abundant, magnificent nature, but how many times do we stop to admire it and say thank you? How often do we think about the less fortunate ones, as André Gadbois suggests...

During my childhood years, I had the privilege of being a girl guide. I remember the chaplain, a Capuchin priest, who would always draw our attention to the beauty of nature and like his patron saint, Francis of Assisi, he would invite us to be thankful for the awe-inspiring wonder of creation. I will never forget the blazing sunrise on 'Île d'Orléans'—its golden rays glittered everywhere on the waters of the Saint Lawrence River. What stunning beauty!

To say "THANK YOU" is a habit I've retained all my life. Needless to say that I jumped for joy when the Lord called me to be an MIC whose spirituality is centered on Thanksgiving. He knew my heart!

This spirituality incites us to live the 'present moment' with joy, to develop a positive outlook on life, to be hopeful in spite of difficult moments.

Today, this issue of our magazine tries to discover the hidden mysteries of life as we refer to: the ASMIC whose hearts reach the Cameroon; Ruth who meets young people underneath the Msolo tree; ecologists in the making, from Japan, who wet their feet to discover the secrets of rice. All these testimonies open our heart to others and to gratitude toward our Creator.

Marie-Paule Sanjean, m.i.c.

READERS' CORNER

micmissionnews@pressemic.org
calls out to you!

This column belongs to you. Share your impressions and comments with us in order to deepen our reflection. Make yourselves heard!

MIC Mission News does not publish unsigned letters, nor letters whose subject matter infringes on the journalistic code of ethics. We reserve the right to abridge letters.

THÉRÈSE BOULANGER, O.S.U.
—QUÉBEC, QC

With much joy I read your article and that of Sr. Suzanne Labelle. The winter issue, 2008, is impressive and very interesting; it deserves to be read and reread. Congratulations for the photo of the stained-glass window; the close-up is very attractive.

GASTON BERGERON
—DRUMMONDVILLE, QC

I just received the last issue of your magazine. More than ever, I've read it with great interest. I wish to congratulate you for the initiative taken in presenting us the Founders of Quebec as we are about to celebrate our 400th anniversary. I've come to realize that I did not really know the pioneers of our history under the banner of faith. Thank you for presenting them to us. These few pages will inspire the homily I will give on the 3^d Monday of Lent. In Quebec, since a few years, we have forgotten that aspect of our history.

FRANCINE ARCHAMBAULT
—L'ASSOMPTION, QC

The presentation of your magazine *Le Précurseur/MIC Mission News* is a gem. What to say of its content—the articles are adapted to our times and most interesting to read. I also greatly appreciate the calendar, especially its format.



SUMMER KEBABS

As much as private capital, governments, technology, try to unite and build links reaching out to the general population, wealth is not evenly distributed and human beings suffer from the situation.

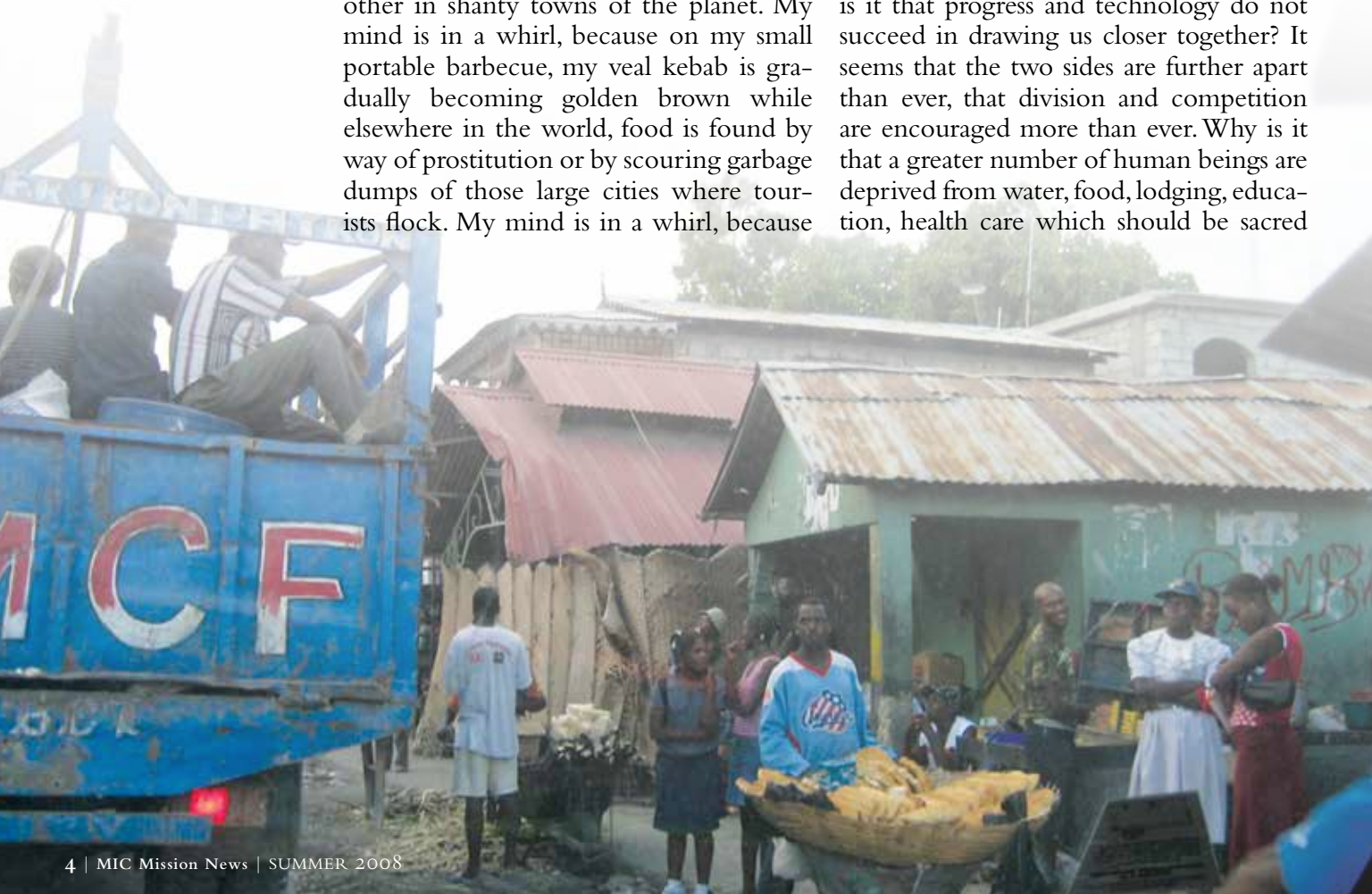
By André Gadbois

I am all settled by the river bank; my little blue tent of 40 years stands solidly behind me. As I look over to the other side of the river, my mind whirls. I see numerous trailers, campers, luxurious recreational motor homes, the ones utilized by politicians to reach the countryside (not the natural space that is being deserted, but land seized by the powerful). My mind is in a whirl, as I think of my old tent that is actually more comfortable than thousands of Montreal homes or millions of shacks stacked up against each other in shanty towns of the planet. My mind is in a whirl, because on my small portable barbecue, my veal kebab is gradually becoming golden brown while elsewhere in the world, food is found by way of prostitution or by scouring garbage dumps of those large cities where tourists flock. My mind is in a whirl, because

I can move about freely while knowing that others are locked up because of their ideas, because of wars, because of poverty—conditions which are sustained by their heads of State.

AS ON THE HIGHWAY, WEALTH IS JAMMED

My mind is still in a whirl and it is filled with questions. I ask: Why is it that the world's wealth is not evenly distributed? Why is it that every human being does not have an adequate existence? Why is it that progress and technology do not succeed in drawing us closer together? It seems that the two sides are further apart than ever, that division and competition are encouraged more than ever. Why is it that a greater number of human beings are deprived from water, food, lodging, education, health care which should be sacred



rights for all? Why is it that at Humanity's festive table, so many are excluded? Is it fate? Misfortune? Punishment? Debility? Innate weakness of certain human beings?

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be, knows us by name (Isaiah 43:1.6). Each one is precious to Him; He is by our side day and night; through troubled waters He is with us; all along our life He guards us like the shepherd who watches over his sheep, leading them to green pastures (Psalm 23). In His image we have been created: His Breath entered our nostrils and gave us life. Biblical prophets denounced the other god, the god of the golden calf—today, the god of capital gain. This god of capital gain eliminated and continues to eliminate those who are not profitable. The hidden god behind the computer screen says: If people are incapable of following the money market and its competitive trading, if they are weak at the bargaining table, then it's their fault, let them disappear. It's free trade and globalization: it's each to his own, to conquer his place. The god of capital gain never sleeps, its temples are opened 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its own children become mutual enemies as they fight to expand their markets for survival. When the battle of the strong and mighty is over, the remains of the unproductive skeletons lay bare on the sand. By this deregulation, all common good and sacred rights are buried. The conquerors deserve to govern as they wish.

AM I JUST A HUMAN RESOURCE?

Still sitting by the river bank with my little blue tent behind me, another question

comes to mind: Of what use has progress and technology been?—a PROMISE OF HAPPINESS? With Riccardo Petrella, I tend to answer: ... *to allow private capital to freely circulate throughout the world, without any obstacles politically, legally, fiscally—and searching for the best in productivity.*¹ Those who already had a good place on the market, now have a greater one; those who only had a small portion, lost everything; and those who already had lost are now buried. The god of capital gain creates a world where the students must learn to become human resources—similar to gold, silver, oil: when the mines or wells have given their all, we thank them.

My juicy kebab is golden brown, it makes my mouth water. However, my head is still spinning, this time with a small project inspired by the Exodus, the multiplication of the loaves, and Jesus' last supper (primacy of the human life and its sacred rights, of one-ness and democratic accountability). Set-up a table, invite everyone to the banquet, offer a chair, first and foremost to the ones who are maimed, starved and excluded. There won't be enough meat: we'll find some nearby; there won't be enough green peppers and onions: we'll find some at the corner; there won't be enough chopsticks: we'll make them; there won't be enough marinade: we'll invent some; there won't be enough bread: He will be right there by our sides. And there will be no lack of hope because it is always strong when the group builds its faith in the one God who is powerful in His poverty. I read this in the book of Exodus and the Acts of the Apostles. 

¹PETRELLA, Ricardo,
Pour une nouvelle narration du monde, Éd. Écosociété, p. 31

Photo page 4:

A daily scene in Haiti

Photo credit: L. Gagné, M.I.C.

Biblical prophets denounced the other god,
the god of the golden calf—today,
the god of capital gain. 



The heart is a quick means of transportation. In Joliette, QC I met a group of valiant women, dynamic and audacious who have committed themselves to a good cause...in the Cameroon. They have a missionary spirit and wish to concretely contribute to the Sisters' projects –world wide. Associated with the MICs (ASMIC) they draw their missionary zeal from Délia Tétréault's spirituality. I have seen them at work...

From Joliette to the Cameroon

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

For a month now, there has been so much going on to prepare that famous annual bazaar in favour of the missions. This year, the proceeds of the sales will go to a project in the Cameroon where Sr. Francine Ravaoarilala, M.I.C. works. With this fund, she will be able to respond more adequately to the needs of the women and children.

AN ABUNDANCE OF INITIATIVES

Boxes accumulate, price tickets are pinned to the clothing, dishes and knick-knacks pile up. Every single item is manipulated with care and determination. A month ago, the Associates published the coming event in a newspaper. On street posts and church doors, posters are already announcing the annual bazaar. Since then, people participate generously: some bring valuable goods to be sold, others already open their purses to help Sr. Francine with her projects.

Thirty Associates organize the hall beautifully where the bazaar will take place. In the streets and shopping mall, Micheline, a dynamic ASMIC, walks around with a huge sign attached to her back indicating the event. Everyone is astonished! She looks at them, laughs with them and cordially invites them to the bazaar. Can anyone resist?

HECTIC DAYS AHEAD

Saturday and Sunday, the 19th and 20th of April, the doors opened wide to welcome a crowd of people. Already standing behind their tables piled up with valuable goods, the ASMIC smiling, enthusiastically welcome everybody. A dress here, a

sweater there, a tea pot, a frying pan, new bed sheets, a painting... The merchandise disappears and the sales ladies are exuberant. As for the buyers, they know very well that not only do they find practical things but that they are participating in a magnificent humanitarian and religious project. And what about the atmosphere? Friendly, joyful!

Tireless and smiling the ASMIC greet everyone with a good word. With joy, they recognize friends of long ago and they respond to the needs of all. The piles of books diminish, tables gradually become bare... A makeshift restaurant rescues the hungry or satisfies those tempted by the menu. The draw of a magnificent patio set and of a bicycle attracts droves of people who wish to win.

Two days of intense activities sensitize many to the cause of the poor: a week-end where the Cameroon is nearby Joliette.

HEARTS REJOICING...

Notwithstanding their age, the MIC Sisters of Joliette take part in the feast. Each one forgets her little aches and pains for the good of the other in Africa.

This missionary enthusiasm brings about much joy to the organizers and the participants: all can imagine the happiness of the Cameroon women and children who are being assisted from generous friends as far as Canada. What a splendid way of uplifting them and reinforce the notion that they too have a place in the sunshine of our planet. *God who created all things, saw that it was very good...* (Gen.1:31). Bravo, dear ASMIC of Joliette! 🌸



This missionary enthusiasm
brings about much joy...



Bafoussam, Cameroon, February 2008

Dear Associates,

Thank you for supporting our project; I am truly grateful! The people in this local mountainous area are farmers. The climate is favourable in the growing of vegetables which are rare in the other hot regions of the country.

The Kombou parish owns a piece of land; every Christian works a few hours a week in the garden: this is their participation, bringing life to the parish, it is also their contribution to the parish costs. Though they have little means, our parishioners are very dedicated. It's a pleasure to work with them.

Our youth have very little recreational activities. To go to college, most of them must walk 4 km, back and forth.

While waiting for the harvest, women are obliged to seek various occupations to survive. They are the ones who pay for their children's school books. Here all the goods are expensive—a litre of gasoline sells for \$1.50. Imagine the rest! This is the reason why the women have asked us to support them in their projects.

Kombou, located 50 km from where I live, is the place where I collaborate in producing a liturgical booklet equivalent to the Living with Christ; it circulates throughout the Cameroon.

I promise to give you more news of our projects as they unfold. In the meantime, thanks again!

With heartfelt gratitude,

Francine Ravaoarilala, M.I.C.

¹ Preparing the bazaar

Photo credit: ASMIC

² Sr. Francine, M.I.C., with Cameroonians

Photo credit: L. Gagné, M.I.C.



***I**t is a place of encounter
Where we come together
Where we meet to find strength for our days
Where our life orientations emerge
Where a way forward is searched for the future
Where each person matters
and contributes for the good of all.*

***It is a place of dialogue**
Where we listen to that which divides
and unites us
Where we unlock the inner pains
and divisions among us
Where we face the demons of our own hearts
and share truths
Where we sometimes pierce the hearts
of each other but also
Where we mend the broken chords between us.*

***It is a sacred place of renewal**
Where we sit close to our roots of life
Where we breathe fresh air
in moments of weariness
Where we find a reason
to believe in nature's goodness
Where we hear the song of the bird
which renews our strength
Where we feel the silence of our ancestral
presence that beckons us to go on.*

***It is a place of celebrations**
Where we welcome new life together
Where we offer sacrifices to protect it
Where we pronounce long lasting commitments
of love and life
Where we give thanks for the great harvests
of each season
Where we sing and dance
to the rhythm of the ancestral drums*

***It is a place of friendship**
That speaks to us of love, peace and harmony
That speaks to us of unity and community
That speaks to us of forgiveness and mercy
That speaks to us of respect and compassion
That speaks to us of beauty and gratitude.*

By Ruth Christine Nyalazi, M.I.C.

The Msolo Tree

*In Canada, the majestic oak tree reminded Sr. Ruth of the importance
of the msolo tree in the Zambian culture.*

Weaving Love in the Heart of Young People

By Ruth Christine Nyalazi, M.I.C.

The Friends of Délia

We cannot truly love until we ourselves have deeply experienced what it is to be loved in a most authentic and liberating way. I've had that privilege within the MIC Community. In this milieu, I feel truly loved and Délia Tétreault has become for me a model of love for all peoples. The rich experience has inspired me to share the Good News with the youth of Chipata, Zambia; my mission here has found its fullness.

I gathered a group of young people and shared with them my dream—a project of love. Their response was amazing. All wanted to begin a personal inward journey, within a training program. The group chose to call itself: The Friends of Délia. This life and love project is extended to all youngsters in the Diocese of Chipata. With the help of the local community and people of good will, the group manages to

visit some remote areas where they speak to other youths about Délia Tétreault, the MIC spirituality, and true authentic love.

Among THE FRIENDS OF DÉLIA many are orphans suffering from emotional deprivation and losses in their lives. As they turn toward others, they discover within themselves the hope, the joy that brings meaning to their lives. They can perceive in their fellow youth their poverty in spirit, their longing to be filled by the Message. THE FRIENDS OF DÉLIA have already received and come to share with them. These youngsters know of the bread of endurance but little of the hope that Christ's Presence can offer them in their daily struggles. Today, so many of them experience love in their life and they pass it on joyfully, thanks to THE FRIENDS OF DÉLIA. 

¹ Ruth under an oak tree, in Canada

Photo: M.-P. Sanfaçon, m.i.c.

² The Friends of Délia

Photo credit: MIC



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INFORMATION:

Phone: (450) 663-6460 #5305

E-mail:

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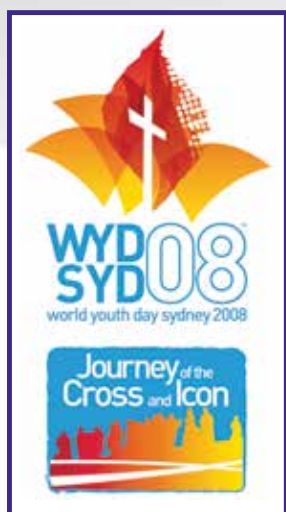
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120 Place Juge Desnoyers
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Canada H7G 1A4

WYD—CHALLENGES AND REALITIES

By Geneviève Dick

Have you ever heard about the WYD (World Youth Day)? It's a large international rally which, since 20 years, has been taking place every three years in different parts of the world. The invitation is launched by the Pope to all the Catholics between 18-35 years of age. And they respond!

Together we experienced the joy and courage to renew our commitments, serving the local communities within our respective areas. 



WYD is also a movement of young people who journey in the footsteps of Jesus, seeking God and meaning in life. Through this event and its consequences, the youth can draw from universal traditions and contribute in creating a network of universal solidarity.

As we go through the experience, we learn how others live their faith, at times in more hostile areas—we return home with the courage and the will to do something with our faith. During the WYD, providing adequate lodgings and nutritious food is difficult but everyone, including young people from North America, Europe as well as from developing countries share the same difficulties. This is just another way to show our solidarity.

When the participants return home, it can take time to integrate what they have lived, to make sense of it and then put into action what they have received. That which happens at WYD can be compared to a seed planted in the heart of thousands

of youth. Many have testified to the fact that upon returning to their respective countries they experience a great solitude and receive little support. Like a plant, they need help to allow the seedling to grow strong—then, one day, they will be able to give back what they have received.

Encouraging and supporting a young person can lead to outstanding results. An example that comes to my mind: a 15 year old boy participated to the WYD in Toronto. During a vigil, he experienced wonderment as he found himself playing ball with young Africans and Europeans. Upon his return, he decided to orient his studies in line with international affairs leading to justice among peoples of all nations. It's in his life-long commitments that results of WYD will be seen.

Another example? Saturday, preceding Palm Sunday, the Diocesan WYD of Montreal attended a magnificent celebration organized by the youth. During the palm procession, we could see numerous flags of the cultural communities that have settled in this city. Together we experienced the joy and courage to go back to our studies, to our work, to our commitments serving the local communities within our respective areas.

Young Catholics live these celebrations, remembering that we are part and parcel of a heterogeneous society. Our faith cannot be self-centered, but must give us the strength to live and act as Jesus did, in the midst of our brothers and sisters and... for them 

¹ Logo—WYD 2008

² WYD—Diocese of Montreal



"ECOLOGISTS" IN THE MAKING

By Marie-Paule Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Do you love surprises? A group of students from Xaviero de Aizu-Wakamatsu, Japan, are ready to go on an excursion with their teachers where nature's luxurious splendour is to be admired. For city kids this is quite a discovery. Brilliant green leaves, small fruits of all colours, intriguing minute insects; how interesting, and how very pretty all this is. Together, children marvel as they touch and see. They are proud of their discoveries, and will have so much to say when they come home in the evening.

We as adults can also live moments of ecstasy and of rapture. As seasons unfold, nature always offers us fascinating beauties. To go a few kilometres away from the city is worth the effort in order to find the marvellous splendours of mother nature. When the eyes of the heart can capture the incredible generosity of the Creator, feelings of awe are experienced before such blessings.

Photos-credit (pages 11, 12, 13):
Riho Nakamura, Hitomi Sasaki





Rice growing requires flooded plains called paddies. The teacher instructs the students how to plant rice.



Cultivated in seedbeds, the seedlings are handed to the young learners.



Rice doesn't plant itself; we must courageously walk in the paddy-field where the soil has been well ploughed.

Rice, a fascina



Harvesting the rice demands a certain work-force because all is done with the sickle.



Every grain of rice is precious; it's an important cereal for many people around the world.



The starchy dust that adheres to the grain surface is washed away.



Somewhat disconcerting? No! Let's do it...



Here we are, the worst is done! Happily, we go about our work transplanting the seedlings in a straight row.



Learning to transplant the rice is a happy experience.

ting food grain



And the rice is cooked in a hundred million ways.



We prepare the rice balls; then we are ready to begin the basic recipes used in Japanese cuisine, such as the sushi so popular in our restaurants.



At the Xaviero School in Japan, the directress Sr. Kyoko Takahashi is proud of her young ecologists who are learning to protect nature in many different ways.

YOUTH ALIVE... IN MALAWI

The inescapable HIV/AIDS pandemic creates and maintains a climate of discouragement and fatalism in many African countries. *Youth Alive*, a movement of youngsters, arouses hope and motivates individuals to live a better life. In Africa, the Church has set a precise objective: lift the secret veil from this pandemic and encourage young people to talk about it openly. Sr. Yvonne, an experienced MIC in this field speaks to us about it.

By Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.



Since my youth days, the Africans have always drawn me by their mystery, their culture and vast continent. After two years of teaching in Canada, I chose to become a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception; this Congregation had many missions in different parts of the world. After my perpetual vows, I left for Malawi, a country then known as Nyasaland and where I have been working for almost 50 years. I began as a teacher, later became an administrator and, finally, was involved in pastoral-oriented work with teachers and youth.

In Malawi, the challenges are numerous because it is one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite hard work and sustained efforts, the country can hardly feed its 12 million inhabitants. The president of the country, Dr. Mutharika, elected to power three years ago, vowed to eradicate poverty in subsidizing agriculture and encouraging small industries. However, an important challenge is slowing and reducing the economic growth: the presence of AIDS. It is devastating the population and the high rate of infection is still on the rise.

Msgr. Hugh Slattery, of Tzaneen, South Africa explained: *The situation is dramatic in the whole country and it continues to worsen. Those 15 years of age and older who are contaminated by the virus make-up 20% of the population; however,*

the majority of the people infected with the HIV are absolutely not conscious of being a victim—so much so that the sickness continues to propagate at an alarming rate.

Since 1990, the Churches and government have organized campaigns sensitizing people against this scourge. They understand the importance of working together to prevent AIDS because of its rapid spread mostly among the youth.

After a stay of two years in Zambia, a neighbouring country, where we also have MIC Sisters, I came back to Malawi in 1999 to continue my work with the youth, awakening them to the fact that AIDS must be fought and defeated. I began the movement **YOUTH ALIVE** which already existed in many other African countries and even throughout the world, but unknown in most of the dioceses of Malawi.

The movement stresses three factors that are deficient in this country:

- lack of follow-up with the youngsters and their parents;
- inadequate politics that allow minors to have an abortion without the consent of their parents;
- external influence of groups whose aims are for their own gain instead of the welfare of the local population.

The movement **YOUTH ALIVE** calls upon the youth to instruct their own age group and uphold the importance of their



2

commitment to fight AIDS. They focus mainly on the 15–25 year olds. The workshops offer moments of reflection and discussion for a better understanding of the virus; during the four days, the youth learn about their personal growth and get a better knowledge of their sexuality. Very often they decide to abstain from sexual relations before marriage and once married to be faithful to their one partner. Since the year 2000, we have organized approximately 80 workshops throughout Malawi and thanks to the financial help received from various organizations, 10 seminars were given to future animators.

Does **YOUTH ALIVE** have an impact in Malawi? It is difficult to measure the outcome or success of the movement, however feedback from adults and local communities reveal the positive effects. A young priest told me: *At first, I was sceptical about this movement, but now I realize that the young people who have followed these courses are more mature and capable of assuming their responsibilities.*

Another program called *Adventure Unlimited* was adopted by **YOUTH ALIVE**. It reaches out to another group of vulnerable children, the 9 to 14 years of age. Nine courses prepared by *Scripture Union*

are offered to them; they learn about their identity, their importance in the family and school. Then, the students participate in various growth activities: physical, social and spiritual; during that time they learn to make good choices, especially in regard to relationships with persons of the opposite sex.

Complimentary to these courses and workshops, we organize debates and sports competitions, all with the collaboration of school directors and teachers. We hope that these activities will help teens to know each other better and to appreciate who they are; being involved in a variety of sports can deter them from contracting the virus. **YOUTH ALIVE** wants to create a new generation free from AIDS, a generation of good citizens for the country and devoted Christians for the Church of tomorrow.

At Mzuzu, Sr. Kettie Ndhlovu, a dynamic junior MIC Sister, originally from Zambia, is taking over the pastoral work with the youth. She will continue implementing **YOUTH ALIVE** at the national and diocesan levels. As for myself, I will assume whatever responsibilities will be entrusted to me in Lilongwe, the country's capital. 

¹ A group of: **YOUTH ALIVE**

² Sr. Yvonne and some instructors
Photos-credit: MIC

The movement **YOUTH ALIVE** calls upon the youth to instruct their own age group and uphold the importance of their commitment to fight AIDS. 

ADULT EDUCATION

Initiatives to Undertake, Actions to Implement

For 30 years, Sister Estelle has been trying to respond to the needs of the time, the place and the people by being attentive to realities as they come up. However, she doesn't expect to get immediate results. But by founding the CEPA (Permanent Adult Education Centre) in Madagascar, she has opted for the future, an investment in potentialities that open the door to sustainable development...



By Estelle Fontaine, M.I.C.
Director of CEPA

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The global context completely determines the fundamental choices of Madagascar's politics and development: liberalism, democratization, decentralization, pluralism, globalization and so on. Particularly among the youth in big cities, pluralism and liberalism tend to make any way of behaving seem acceptable. With the arrival of numerous NGOs (non-governmental organizations), many people now aspire to a different way of life, and to alternate ways of managing and organizing the workplace.

With the lessons learned from various experiences and with the proliferation of novel realities, people are questioning the priorities of the large social groups, and the many Madagascans who have strong group identities are no exception. They are attempting to create their own personal itinerary in the appropriation of Madagascan socio-cultural values. Ultimately, however, they come to feel insecure in this atomization process because of the loss of stable and enduring bearings.

Because of this diversification in the possibilities and desires for change, their initial training cannot give them the competence to face all situations. This is where adult education takes on real importance and why it is becoming a life-long learning process.

SKILL REINFORCEMENT

For production and management, the scientific and technical skills students acquire during their studies often seem unrelated to the socio-cultural milieu. This makes it difficult, even impossible, to integrate these skills in the tasks of promoting development and the improvement of living conditions.

Our CEPA (Permanent Adult Education Centre) seeks to help people harmonize their personal growth with the development of their milieu. This is why we offer people two kinds of modules: modules relating to interpersonal communication and personal human development, and modules conceived to facilitate and improve professional life. We have our own instructors, but if necessary, we can call upon other resource people

PERSONNEL TRAINING

With the small number of instructors we have and who can respond adequately to the needs, we seek to offer them upgrading possibilities. We willingly accepted the ICM (*Institut catholique de Madagascar*) rector's request to find a Canadian university that would accept to work in partnership with ICM to found a psychology department. Until now, no university in the country has offered this program. The University of Sherbrooke immediately accepted the project. We first had to train Madagascan psychologists to ensure a more culturally adapted start-up. Thanks to the Armand-Bombardier Foundation, two bursary recipients are currently finishing their Ph.D.s in psychology at the University of Sherbrooke.

APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION

Another important reality is the need for appropriate documentation in the various areas of teaching and work. For this purpose we have opened a library for the public.

To help the instructors, we have had the book *Les difficultés de votre enfant* (*Your child's difficulties*) published in the Madagascan language. This book was chosen by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research; sixty thousand copies are now a part of the documentation kit distributed to the country's teachers.

Our trainees receive a document in the Madagascan language that gives them points of reference for the results they can expect in the field.

OUR OBJECTIVE AND TARGETED PARTICIPANTS

The vision of CEPA is to contribute to the improved well-being and living conditions of the society by working together toward the human and spiritual growth of individuals and groups.

At our centre, we reach groups that are active in the country's development, but are less financially privileged at the training level. To be more efficient over the long term, we respond as best we can to the requests from heads of businesses and associations. They are potential multipliers! This is true in the case of the trainers from the religious communities as well as in that of the directors and trainers from centres for children who are unschooled, abandoned or in difficulty. It's also the case for farmers who are in charge of savings and credit unions, UN-supported skilled entrepreneurs, and groups of parents, teachers and religious.

This work for the development of the whole human person can only succeed if it is based on deep values that give meaning to life and inspire commitment. This is why the directors of CEPA believe in the vitality of its CHRISTIAN ADVANCEMENT commission. Meditation sessions, Biblical sharing meetings, and days of reflection nourish the faith and incite participants to a commitment adapted to our time.

Even if 52% of Madagascar's population is made up of young people under the age of 18, there are also elderly people who deserve our Centre's attention. Our GROWING OLD BEAUTIFULLY commission welcomes dynamic retired people every Saturday in order to help them maintain their physical and intellectual autonomy and take charge of their human and spiritual quality of life.

God is at the heart of human realities. And it's upon these realities that He gives us life and helps us grow. At CEPA, people learn to reconcile themselves (with themselves, with others, and with the mission they have received from God) and realize they are responsible for their own transformation and that of their people. 



¹ Sr. Estelle with an instructor

² A Session

³ Team work

⁴ Research work at the library
Photos-credit: MIC

The vision of CEPA is to contribute to the improved well-being and living conditions of the Madagascan society. 

She is a tiny, discreet woman, sitting in front of her computer at the office of the MIC Missionary Press in Pont-Viau. Do you want to know in what issue of the magazine a certain article or photo appeared? Ask her! In no time, the information comes spontaneously from her memory or given a few minutes, she will retrieve it in her database. Never discouraged, nor tired, always ready to go to the end of her research, Sr. Cécile Martel, 94 years of age, is the **LIVING MEMORY** of the magazine. I interviewed her for you.

By **Huguette Turcotte, M.I.C.**

H.T.: *Sister Cécile, you are surely the most venerable computerist in the community, perhaps of the City of Montreal or even of the Province of Quebec. How did you develop such expertise in this field? And since when?*

C.M.: Perhaps my natural curiosity has led me into this exploration; I've always loved to read. I recall as a child I had received, at Christmas, a thick story book—it would follow me everywhere. As a young girl, I quickly exhausted all the books from our parish library. Today, since Google is inexhaustible I continue satisfying my curiosity and expanding my knowledge universally. For a missionary, that is fascinating!

H.T.: *Tell me about your travels abroad as a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate-Conception. Before getting acquainted with the computer of the Missionary Press what culture or nationality came to your mind as you thought in terms of mission?*

C.M.: At first, I thought of the Chinese people. I arrived at Tsung Ming, China, in January 1947. The MIC Sisters were there since 1928 and were in charge of a nursery, an orphanage and a dispensary. I arrived shortly after the war and for a long period of time the Sisters there had received no communication from the Mother House in Montreal. I and my companions informed them of the death of our Foundress, Délia

COMPUTERIST AT AGE 94



Téreault which occurred in 1941. It came to them as a shock! Once settled, I barely had time to begin learning the language, when the following year, a young religious Chinese Community was able to take over the works we had begun. We therefore left Tsung Ming to start anew somewhere else. For me, it was Manila, in the Philippines where I quit learning Chinese and began studying English.

In the Philippines, I worked until 1972. I will never forget my stay at Sapang Palay, 56 km from Manila. Many poor families had been evicted from government owned land and had been left on their own without any commodities, living in great distress. Thanks to a companion, Sr. Carmen Castonguay, who intervened on their behalf—a Relief Centre was built. There, the distribution of food, clothing and medication was offered to the population. The Immaculate Conception Centre then organized workshops in sewing; women not only learned a skill but were able to earn a small salary for the upkeep of their families. I worked a few years in Sapang Palay and up to this day I keep vivid memories of my mission there.

In 1972, upon my return to Canada, another challenge was offered to me; I accepted to be a promoter of our mission magazine, mainly in the Diocese of Joliette



where I come from. We went from door to door, visiting families; I liked that kind of apostolate as it allowed me to be a good listener and to bring comfort to those who needed help. After 13 years on the road, I had to relinquish my work but I continued being active as secretary at the office.

H.T.: *And that is where you were first introduced to a computer. Do you remember?*

C.M.: Yes, it was a Tandy... in 1985. I began reading the manuals and on my own discovered how to work with this Tandy. I followed courses that were given on T.V. and occasionally I would seek help from our chaplain Fr. Fernand Gaudry, P.M.E. An expert in this field, he would find solutions to all the problems. From the very beginning, I was fascinated by the unlimited source of information that could be found in a computer. I felt the urge to create a database of all the photos that had appeared in our mission magazine, as of the first issue in May of 1920. In 2007, the 500th issue was published—quite an accomplishment for a religious missionary community of women!

H.T.: *I now understand how you have become an enthusiast of the computer... at 94! About your interest in reading, I can testify to that because in 1953, when we were together in Manila, I often observed you*

walking around with a book or magazine in your hand. Later, when we began writing the history of our missions in China, your outstanding talent in research was precious. Among other tasks, you drew a complete list of all the MIC Sisters with the dates and places where they had lived in that country. And all this with an old computer that could today be a piece of attraction in a museum.

It was quite a feat! I take this opportunity to thank you for your exceptional collaboration... But, do you foresee retirement pretty soon?

C.M.: I don't like that word if it means 'doing nothing'... I believe it's a question of mobility and mental health. Recently, I lost my balance, tripped and fell, this brought about a change in my status within our MIC Health Program. Also, my hard of hearing makes social contacts more difficult. However, my condition does not prevent me from walking, with a cane, the long hallways of our residence in Pont-Viau and sit in front of a computer: that is where I find the freedom of my youthfulness. I still travel the world as I did yesteryears, and I thank God for man's ingenuity who invented computer science. I would like to continue many more years as long as there would be a computer close-by... and card players as neighbours. ☺

^{1,2} Sr. Cécile working on her computer

Photos-credit:

M.-P. Sanfaçon, M.I.C.

Dawn of a New Life



Beatrice Pelletier, M.I.C.
(Sr. Joseph-Émile)
1918-2008

Saint-Germain de Kamouraska, Quebec

Beatrice had a quiet childhood. At 14, she attended the boarding school of the Sisters of Charity where she discovered within her heart God's calling to religious life. Later, at 22 she entered the MIC Institute. In 1955, she received her mandate for the Philippines; she worked with the poor in Tondo and in Sapang-Palay where thousands of poor had been evicted from the Capital city. Sister Beatrice was appreciated for her sound advices and sense of organization. Due to impaired vision, Sister experienced solitude but she always found solace in God's abiding presence.



Odile Malboeuf, M.I.C.
(Sr. Ste Denise)
1907-2008

Sudbury, Ontario

Without her father's consent, Odile entered religious life at age 20, convinced this was her calling. Soon after her profession, she was sent to Manchuria, China. She learned Mandarin and responded to the needs of the people with overwhelming joy. Eventually, the father sent his daughter his blessings! During the 1941 war Sr. Odile was under house arrest by the Japanese with other MICs and was liberated in 1945. She was then sent to Hong Kong, Taiwan and later to the Chinese Centre in Ottawa. Her missionary life was a long Magnificat!



Thérèse Moisan, M.I.C.
(Sr. Jules-Marie)
1919-2008

Saint-Georges de Beauce, Quebec

Mischievous, her love of beauty, and having been raised in a family of musicians, Thérèse soon discovered her inclination for the arts and music. Throughout her religious life she radiated joy and created a family atmosphere wherever she went. Her secret? A wholesome upbringing and the love of her patron saint—Therese of the Child Jesus. With simplicity and openness Thérèse always responded generously to whatever was asked of her. Until the very end of her life, she welcomed with a smile all those who came to her; her serenity touched the lives of many.



Jeanne Plante, M.I.C.
(Sr. Pierre-de-Vérone)
1910-2008

Sorel, Quebec

At a young age, Jeanne experienced the loss of her mother. She went to boarding school until the age of 17. Gradually, Jeanne's desire to become a religious took shape. At 25, she entered the MIC Institute. In 1953, she was appointed to Malawi, Africa, the continent of her dream. Many were her tasks: from teaching school children to training young women in domestic science, and eventually becoming midwife. Sr. Jeanne was the strong woman of the gospel who would forget self to assist those in distress. Her mission was well fulfilled.

*Partings here on
earth are a promise
of meeting again
for all eternity.*

Délia Tétrault

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

May the Spirit

dwell in you

and give you

a heart as vast

as the world,

ever joyful

in hope!

May He

inspire you

to bring the light

of Christ to

the world with

the apostles'

eagerness!



Sr. Yvonne (right) with animators

With years of experience in the teaching field, Sr. Yvonne has worked diligently with the youth in Malawi and Zambia, Africa. She has also pioneered a project to help fight AIDS/HIV among the younger generation. She recently returned to Chipata (Zambia) where she is currently a member of the MIC formation team, teaching novices during their training years.

Yvonne Ayotte, M.I.C.,
New-Liskeard, Ontario



Sr. Murielle (left) with Dominique Leman, lay missionary

Always dynamic, and having served 37 years in Peru and Bolivia, where she journeyed with the youth, encouraging them along life's difficult path and also being involved in mission promotion, Sr. Murielle is returning to Bolivia after a short stay in Canada. She is assigned at the Rural Institute of Education, where she will work with women from the countryside.

Murielle Dubé, M.I.C.,
Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil, Quebec



Sr. Louise (left) at a 'tiny tots' graduation

Faithful to her function as provincial secretary in Malawi, Africa, Sr. Louise is returning with enthusiasm to the country she loves. A qualified and experienced nurse, she will bring joy and comfort to the many orphans who are victims of AIDS.

Louise Lefebvre, M.I.C.,
Granby, Quebec

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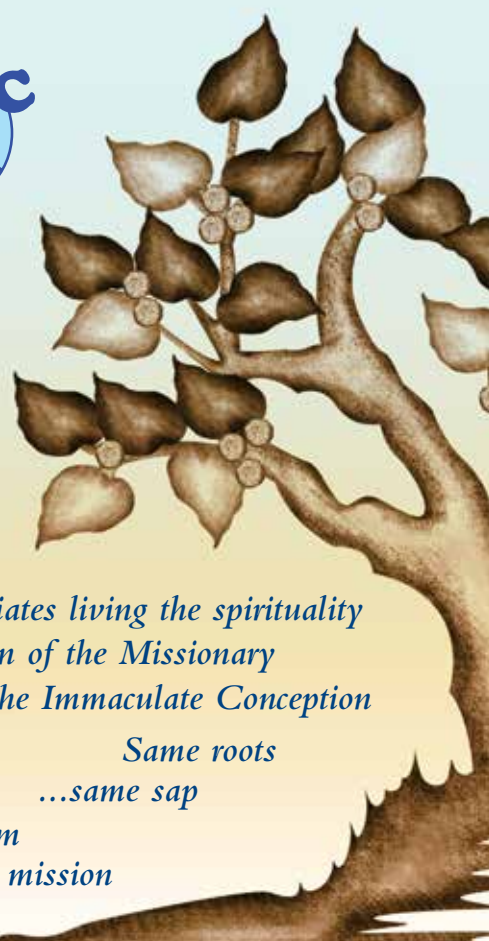
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Claude Maheu
Vice-président
claudio.maheu@cmpl.qc.ca

4830, MONTÉE ST-HUBERT
SAINT-HUBERT (QUÉBEC)
J3Y 1V1

TÉL. : 450 445-5558
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Forest of Peace

*The woodland is filled with beauty
At this summer time of year.
Its glory is around us
Making God seem very near.*

*The voices of His creatures
Sound like music in the air.
And the sun in all her brilliance
Shines on blossoms everywhere.*

*From the crimson of a wild rose
That holds its head up high;
To the tiny violet trembling
As a soft breeze whispers by.*

*The earth spreads forth her glory
For all mankind to see...
A living, majestic portrait
Of quality and tranquillity.*

S. Sallay

